



EUROPEAN UNION OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS
UNION EUROPEENNE DES MEDECINS OMNIPRATICIENS



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KEY ISSUES FOR UK GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

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- Figures have recently been published showing that the government's investment in general practices in England during the three years following the negotiation of the new primary care contract was £1.7 billion more than it had promised. The BMA has argued that as practice income is now directly related to the quality of patient care, more money spent has meant more lives saved. This also covers costs that were outside GP practice accounts, such as the re-provision of out of hours services.
- The latest results of the Quality and Outcomes Framework have recently been published. These have demonstrated yet again the high quality services being provided by general practices across the UK. This is particularly encouraging given that the QOF was revised this year to make it harder to achieve maximum points.
- The UK National Audit Office is conducting an inquiry into the GP contract.
- Discussions are taking place with the UK government on extending opening hours in UK general practice. This follows commitments given by the Prime Minister and other Ministers that this issue was a priority for them. Options for central arrangements are a possibility, though at present there are also negotiations going on in respect of possible local deals. The BMA has stated that any additional opening must be properly resourced.

UEMO – PRESIDENCY

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- The BMA General Practitioners Committee has initiated a campaign to promote and defend UK general practice, partly as a response to an orchestrated political and media campaign to denigrate it. This will include significant parliamentary work, information and campaigns directed at patients, and more frequent email and other communication with GPs
- UK GPs are scrutinising carefully the interim report of the Darzi review of the NHS. Lord Ara Darzi, a surgeon who has been appointed as a UK health minister to lead the review, has already conducted a similar review in London. In primary care, there is a plan to open up the supply of GP services in deprived communities by introducing a wider range of providers. Specifically, at least 100 new practices are to be set up in the 25% of PCTs with the poorest provision. PCTs are also asked to set up 150 GP-led health centres in easily accessible locations, providing a range of services available to all patients including those not registered with the GPs working in the centres. This would almost certainly increase substantially the number of practices/health centres operated by private providers. PCTs have also been asked to work with existing and new practices on 'greater flexibility' in opening hours. Future plans include establishing an advisory board to develop world class primary and community care services, the expansion of patient choice in primary care, and more local procurement of services. The report also has significant implications for secondary care.
- There has been an independent inquiry into Modernising Medical Careers, the plan to reform medical training in the UK. This recommends an extension to GP training, including two years to be spent as a GP registrar following core specialty training (as an SHO working in hospital). This has caused considerable concern. The BMA will be submitting a formal response, with input from the General Practitioners Committee.
- The BMA has been participating in high-level planning in preparation for an expected flu pandemic. At present concerns remain about the practicalities of supporting GP practices in the event that this occurs, and discussions are continuing.
- The General Practitioners Committee is continuing to produce guidance on commissioning, the latest on procuring external support for commissioners, and delivering care closer to home. There is continuing concern about the risks of widespread commissioning by private providers.

If UEMO delegates would like further information on any of the subjects covered above, do not hesitate to ask the UK delegation or email us at: cmay@bma.org.uk